

**Standard USHC-9:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the social, economic, and political events that impacted the United States during the Cold War era.

**USHC-9.4** Compare the domestic and foreign policies of the period—including Kennedy’s New Frontier, Johnson’s Great Society, and Nixon’s establishment of environmental protection and rapprochement with China—as well as relations with the Soviet Union and the continuing crises in the Middle East under all administrations from Harry Truman to Jimmy Carter. (H, G, P)

**Taxonomy Level:** 2.2-B Understand/ Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous and future knowledge:**

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students were introduced to the course of the Cold War (5-5.4). Students were also introduced to the civil rights movement (5-5.1).

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students summarized the political and economic transformation of Western and Eastern Europe after World War II, including the significance of the Truman Doctrine (7-6.1) and the events of the Cold War (7-6.2).

In Global Studies, students summarized the ideologies and global effects of communism and democracy, including the effects of totalitarianism and communism in China, Eastern Europe and Soviet Union (GS-6.1). They summarized the worldwide effects of the Cold War (GS-6.2). Students compared the challenges and successes of the movements toward independence and democratic reform following World War II, Africa, Asia, and Latin America (GS-6.3).

In American Government, students will be expected to explain ways in which Americans can monitor and engage in politics and government.(USG-5.3) Understanding the historical role of presidents in shaping both domestic and foreign policy will help students better appreciate their own role as voters.

**It is essential for students to know:**

Although students have studied the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement in earlier grades, students have never been required to know the policies of specific presidents of the era. Students must be able to identify which policies were pursued during the presidential administrations of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter in order to be able to compare them. Students must know the difference between foreign and domestic policies and understand that some presidents were more successful in one area of policy than in the other.

Students should understand that **Kennedy** was able to articulate a **New Frontier**, but was not able to get legislation passed to put it into action. In part, this was due to the Southern Democrats in Congress and to his own lack of political experience. Kennedy introduced the civil rights bill that Johnson was able to push through Congress. JFK pledged to land a man on the moon, which finally came about during the Nixon administration. Kennedy was considered to be more successful in foreign policy. Kennedy started the Peace Corps to address the problems of Third World countries and win the hearts of citizens there. Despite the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the building of the Berlin Wall, Kennedy was able to avert disaster during the Cuban Missile Crisis and was seen as a successful Cold Warrior. The Cuban Missile crisis prompted Kennedy to call for a treaty banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere. Although Kennedy increased the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, at the time of his assassination, the United States was not fully committed (USHC 9.3).

**Lyndon Johnson** was able to use his own political expertise with the Democratic Congress and the memory of the slain Kennedy to push through civil rights legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964,

the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and an affirmative action plan in awarding government contracts. His vision of the **Great Society** led to the establishment of Medicare and Medicaid, the initiation of the War on Poverty, education legislation including Head Start and the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. Although some of these programs had only limited success, they established important services and extended the government's commitment to social welfare that had started with the New Deal. Johnson was less successful in foreign policy. Trying to avoid losing Vietnam to communism, LBJ extended the military commitment based on the Gulf of Tonkin resolution and lost credibility with the American people. His attempt to fund both "guns and butter" led to inflation and the inability to fully fund domestic initiatives. Johnson lost the confidence of the American people and left office under the shadow of Vietnam.

**Richard Nixon** won the 1968 election on the promise of "law and order" and with the understanding that he would end the war in Vietnam. His domestic policy was to limit the commitment of the executive branch to further efforts to build the great society and to the enforcement of civil rights. His southern strategy was designed to gain support from southern conservatives for the Republican Party. Kennedy and Johnson's support for civil rights and Nixon's southern strategy won the African American vote for the Democrats and turned the formerly Democratic 'solid South' into a Republican stronghold. The Democratic Congress passed and Nixon signed into law landmark environmental legislation in the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and the Endangered Species Act. Nixon also established the Environmental Protection Agency in response to public concerns reflected in the first celebration of Earth Day. Nixon began Vietnamization, but also expanded the war into Laos and Cambodia and exacerbated the debate at home. He pursued *rapprochement with China* in order to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. This was part of Nixon's attempt to divide the communist bloc and isolate North Vietnam in order to influence the peace negotiations. Nixon's policy led to the recognition of China during the Carter administration. Nixon also pursued a policy of *détente* with the USSR.

Problems in the **Middle East** developed as a result of postwar events exacerbated by the Cold War. Israel was recognized by the United States in 1948 during the Truman administration as a homeland for Jews after the Holocaust. President Eisenhower intervened in the Suez Crisis and issued the Eisenhower Doctrine. American foreign policy supported Israel in their ongoing defense against their Arab neighbors. The importance of Middle East oil to the United States' economy made the conditions in the Middle East of paramount importance to the United States and led the Nixon administration to engage in shuttle diplomacy to stop the oil embargo by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). President Jimmy Carter's personal commitment to human rights led him to act as a facilitator for peace in the Middle East, resulting in the Camp David Accords, but also led to a setback in the United States relationship with the Soviet Union. The invasion of the American embassy and the holding of 179 American hostages by the government of Iran contributed to Carter's defeat in the 1980 presidential election.

**It is not essential for students to know:**

Students do not need to know about the personal failings of Kennedy, including his womanizing, nor do they need to know about Johnson's ongoing feud with Robert Kennedy and other members of JFK's cabinet. They do not need to know about historians' speculation that, had JFK lived, he would have ended the Vietnam War after the assassination of Diem.

Students do not need to know all of the programs included in the Great Society, nor do they need to understand the extent to which the Great Society continued the New Deal. Students do not need to know the influence that LBJ had on the Supreme Court by nominating Thurgood Marshall, nor do they need to understand the role of the court in the 1960s in protecting the rights of criminals.

Students do not need to know about “ping-pong” diplomacy or that the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT) were the result of détente with the U.S.S.R. The indicator does not require that students understand the role of the Watergate scandal in bringing down the Nixon administration and in undermining the credibility of the government for the American people.

Students do not need to remember the names and dates of the wars in the Middle East or the names of leaders such as Anwar Sadat, Menachim Begin or Yassar Arafat.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments will require students to **explain** domestic and foreign policies under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, as well as the policies of presidents from Truman through Carter towards the U.S.S.R. and the Middle East. Students should be able to **summarize** the policies of each president, **compare** them to one another, **classify** policies and identify **examples** of policies of each president in both the domestic and foreign policy arena. Students should be able to **interpret** maps, graphs and political cartoons and **infer** their relationship to information about the time period. Students should be able to **interpret** the significance of each policy and **infer** its impact on overall United States policy.